

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 CG-00 COA-02 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 /135 W

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R 201905Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3984

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

USOECD PARIS 522

USMISSION GENEVA

USEC BRUSSELS

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

NISRA/KEFLAVIK

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1118

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR MARR IC UK

SUBJECT: IDF, NATO AND FISHERIES DISPUTE: RADIO INTERVIEW WITH
CHAIRMAN OF ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN RADIO INTERVIEW THORARINN THORARINSSON,
CHAIRMAN OF ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, EMPHASIZED
(1) DECAY OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR NATO BECAUSE OF BRITISH ACTION
IN FISHERIES DISPUTE AND (2) GOI POLICY THAT IDF SHALL
WITHDRAW FROM ICELAND IN STAGES. END SUMMARY.

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2. THORARINN THORARINSSON, CHAIRMAN OF ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF GOVERNING PROGRESSIVE PARTY, WAS INTERVIEWED ON ICELANDIC RADIO PROGRAM "HOT LINE" SEPTEMBER 19. SUBJECT OF PROGRAM WAS ROLE OF ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND ICELAND'S FOREIGN POLICY. THORARINSSON STATED THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN COMMITTEE AND FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON WAS "VERY GOOD." HE SAID THERE WAS GENERAL UNITY WITHIN THE COMMITTEE AND AN EASY ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS. HE STATED THAT COMMITTEE ACTS ONLY AS CONSULTATIVE BODY AND MAKES NO POLICY DECISIONS. IT SELDOM VOTES ON ISSUES BUT ONLY DISCUSSES THEM AND ADVISES GOI OF VIEWS.

3. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON BRITISH PROPOSAL THAT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION BE ESTABLISHED TO CONSIDER PLACEMENT OF BLAME IN COLLISIONS INVOLVING BRITISH NAVAL UNITS AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSELS, THORARINSSON SAID THAT IF INCIDENT OCCURRED WITHIN 50-MILE LIMIT IT WAS WITHIN ICELANDIC JURISDICTION AND WAS UP TO ICELANDIC COURTS TO PLACE BLAME THE BRITISH WOULD BE PERMITTED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO ICELANDIC COURT PROCEEDINGS. IF INCIDENT OCCURRED OUTSIDE 50-MILE LIMIT HE SAID HE WOULD AGREE TO INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION PROCEDURE.

4. THORARINSSON WAS ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY HOPE THAT NATO WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH NAVAL VESSELS. HE REPLIED THAT ICELAND HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED BY NATO'S INABILITY TO INTERVENE BUT THAT RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN MORE ACTIVITY THAN BEFORE. HOWEVER NEITHER NATO, UN NOR OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES WOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE DISPUTE.

5. THORARINSSON WAS QUESTIONED CLOSELY ON IDF ISSUE. HE WAS ASKED IF IT WAS POLICY OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY THAT IDF BE DISMANTLED. HE REPLIED, "IT HAS BEEN PROGRESSIVE PARTY POLICY FROM THE BEGINNING THAT MILITARY FORCES SHOULD NOT BE STATIONED IN ICELAND DURING PEACETIME. BECAUSE OF IMPROVED WORLD SITUATION WE DECIDED BEFORE THE LAST ELECTION TO HAVE THE MILITARY LEAVE IN STAGES AND WE ENTERED THE ELECTION ON THAT PREMISE." HE WAS ASKED IF THERE WAS AN ALTHING MAJORITY FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE IDF AND ICELANDIC RESIGNATION FROM NATO. TO THIS HE ANSWERED, "THE ALTHING WILL NOT TAKE A POSITION

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ON NATO AT THIS POINT. WE WANT THE MILITARY TO LEAVE IN STAGES. WE WILL KEEP THE PROMISE NOT TO NEGOTIATE ON WHETHER BUT RATHER HOW AND WHEN THE MILITARY WITHDRAWS." (THIS FORMULATION APPEARS TO BE CLOSE TO THAT OF COMMUNIST MINISTER MAGNUS KJARTANSSON WITH THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE THAT THORARINSSON DOES NOT SPECIFY A TIME SCHEDULE.) HE WAS ASKED WHAT SITUATION WOULD BE CREATED IF THE IDF DID WITHDRAW. HIS ANSWER WAS, "I HAVE NO WORRIES ABOUT THE SITUATION." WHEN ASKED

IF RESIGNATION FROM NATO WAS TO ICELAND'S BENEFIT, HE EMPHASI-
ZED THAT ICELAND SHOULD REMAIN IN NATO UNDER "UNCHANGED
CIRCUMSTANCES." HE ADDED THAT BRITISH "ATTACKS MAY MAKE US
WITHDRAW FROM NATO." HE SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE HAD BEEN
TURNED AGAINST NATO AND ALTHOUGH POLITICIANS ARE STILL IN FAVOR
OF RETAINING MEMBERSHIP, THEY CANNOT IGNORE PUBLIC OPINION.
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